

VZCZCXRO7834
PP RUEHIK
DE RUEHUP #0910 3641020
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 301020Z DEC 09
FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4784
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0553
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0163

UNCLAS BUDAPEST 000910

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/CE JAMIE MOORE.

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [KISL](#) [KDEM](#) [OPDC](#) [HU](#)
SUBJECT: ENGAGING HUNGARY ON THE "DEFAMATION OF RELIGIONS"
ISSUE

REF: A. STATE 128320
[1](#)B. BUDAPEST 796
[1](#)C. BUDAPEST 779
[1](#)D. BUDAPEST 752
[1](#)E. BUDAPEST 666

[1](#)1. (SBU) Hungary has a clear track record on the "defamation of religions" question. It backs the common EU position, which echoes USG recommendations, and in November 2009 voted against the UN Third Committee resolution on the issue. In the UN Human Rights Council, it has stood with us on other contentious questions, such as opposing resolutions on the Goldstone report and the situation in the Palestinian Territories and East Jerusalem.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Hungary's position in the Human Rights Council gives us a strong ally in our efforts to oppose attempts to create a new treaty that would codify "defamation of religions." As one Hungarian diplomat told us, "It is good for like-minded countries to support each other inside the Council."

MFA OUR NATURAL INTERLOCUTOR

[1](#)3. (SBU) Our natural interlocutor on the "defamation of religions" issue is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where we have extremely good contacts. We anticipate that the Hungarians will back the U.S. Action Plan and support the proposed U.S. resolution combating racial and religious discrimination at the upcoming session of the Human Rights Council in March.

TARGETED ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS

[1](#)4. (SBU) We recommend that initial engagement efforts should target either International Organizations and Human Rights Department Director Kinga Simon, or her Deputy, Dr. Istvan Lakatos. We could approach the Political Director, State Secretary Gabor Iklody, as well. Conveying the message simultaneously to Hungary's UN Mission and in Washington may help ensure that there is no disconnect between Budapest policy makers and their UN Mission.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

[1](#)5. (SBU) We see other opportunities beyond the March Human Rights Council meeting. In 2008, the Ministry launched a series of annual international human rights conferences under the title of the "Budapest Human Rights Forum." The first conference was devoted to the plight of human rights defenders, while the 2009 session focused on a range of issues from preventing genocide to the right to free and fair

elections. This forum could provide an opportunity to expand international consensus around the proposed U.S. Action Plan.

Hungary's presidency of the Visegrad 4 Group, (Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia), which runs through June 2010, could offer another opportunity to build support for the Action Plan.

TAILORING THE MESSAGE

¶6. (SBU) Like Americans, Hungarians place a high value on freedom of speech and expression, and the Hungarian Constitution enshrines guarantees for these rights. An approach that focuses on how codifying "defamation of religion" could pose a threat to these freedoms would likely resonate well with the Hungarian Government. A message coordinated along these lines with representatives of like-minded EU Member States, such as France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, could also prove useful.

LEVINE